

AMENDMENTIn the claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An electrosurgical instrument for applying electrical energy to tissue at a target site, the instrument comprising:
a tissue-contacting surface; and
at least one active electrode recessed within the tissue-contacting surface and having a curved configuration; and
a return electrode spaced from said active electrode wherein said return electrode has an exposed surface area substantially larger than said active electrode so as to have a minimal tissue effect on the tissue.
2. (Currently Amended) The instrument of claim 1 wherein said return electrode is spaced proximally from said active electrode ~~further comprising:~~
~~a return electrode spaced apart from the at least one active electrode.~~
3. (Original) The instrument of claim 2 further comprising:
a fluid source for providing electrically conductive fluid between the return electrode and the at least one active electrode; and
one or more connectors coupled to the at least one active electrode for connecting the active electrodes to a high frequency power supply.
4. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 further comprising:
at least one opening within the tissue-contacting surface for venting the target site.
5. (Original) The instrument of claim 4 wherein the at least one opening is concentric with the at least one active electrode.
6. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 further comprising:

at least one recess within the tissue-contacting surface for facilitating fluid flow to the at least one active electrode.

7. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 wherein the at least one active electrode is positioned within a cavity within the tissue-contacting surface.

8. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 wherein the at least one active electrode is flush with the tissue-contacting surface.

9. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 wherein the at least one active electrode is recessed below the tissue-contacting surface.

10. (Original) The instrument of claim 2 wherein the return electrode is positioned about the tissue-contacting surface.

11. (Original) The instrument of claim 1 wherein the at least one active electrode has an annular configuration.

12. (Currently Amended) An electrosurgical instrument for applying electrical energy to tissue at a target site, the instrument comprising:

a shaft, a shaft proximal end and a shaft distal end;

~~a tissue treatment member at the distal end, the tissue treatment member having an annular configuration and comprising:~~

~~a tissue contacting surface;~~

an electrically nonconductive annular support, said support comprising a fluid entry port on a tissue-contacting surface, a fluid vent port on a second surface opposing said tissue-contacting surface, and a central void connecting said entry port to said vent port;

an outer surface; and

an active electrode having an annular configuration and recessed within the tissue-contacting surface.

13. (Original) The instrument of claim 12 further comprising:
a return electrode having an annular configuration and positioned about the outer surface.

14. (Original) The instrument of claim 13 further comprising:
a fluid source for providing electrically conductive fluid between the return electrode and
the at least one active electrode; and
one or more connectors coupled to the at least one active electrode for connecting the
active electrodes to a high frequency power supply.

15. (Currently Amended) The instrument of claim 12 wherein the central void is in
fluid communication with an aspiration lumen to aspirate fluids and materials ~~annular
configuration of the tissue treatment member defines an opening for venting the target site.~~

16. (Original) The instrument of claim 12 wherein the tissue treatment member
further comprises at least one recess therein for facilitating fluid flow to the at least one active
electrode.

17. (Original) The instrument of claim 12 wherein the at least one active electrode is
flush with the tissue-contacting surface.

18. (Original) The instrument of claim 12 wherein the at least one active electrode is
recessed below the tissue-contacting surface.

19. (Original) The instrument of claim 13 wherein the outer surface extends beyond
return electrode to define an active portion of the tissue treatment member adjacent the active
electrode.

20. (Currently Amended) An electrosurgical instrument for applying electrical energy to tissue at a target site, the instrument comprising:
a shaft, a shaft proximal end and a shaft distal end;
an [[a non-]]electrically non-conductive [[conducting]] support disposed at the distal end, said support having an annular configuration and a tissue-contacting surface having an annular recess therein;
an active electrode positioned within the annular recess; and
a return electrode positioned about an outer surface of said support
21. (Original) The instrument of claim 20 wherein said support comprises ceramic.
22. (Original) The instrument of claim 21 wherein said return electrode has a clip shape.
23. (Original) The instrument of claim 22 having only one active electrode.